

IAIA Washington Area Branch Midterm Report – November 2008

Branch Chair: Will Knowland and Gene Owens, Co-Chairs

Branch responsibilities and changes:

The WAB continues as the local forum for the many Members and friends of IAIA who reside in the Washington, DC area, and to a number of Members residing elsewhere who take particular interest in the Branch's program.

The previous Chairman, John Boyle, retired from the World Bank and passed over the reins of the WAB to Will and Gene in June. Gene Owens is well known within IAIA, having previously served on the Sponsorship Committee, and is a current member of the Training Program Development Committee (TPDC) for the USA. Will Knowland has been a Member and actively participated in WAB meetings for half a dozen years. Will and Gene have known each other for over a decade, and have been working together on a consulting team in Armenia over the past year. Will is full time with Mott MacDonald; Gene is retired but continuing to work several months a year on projects of interest. They share a common characteristic of WAB members: they travel frequently. So the idea of Co-Chairing WAB was a natural.

Activities since Perth:

At the June meeting (June 11), Harvey Himberg (World Bank) presented his memories from IAIA '08 in Perth. Arlene Fleming had also attended, and shared her recollections, which focused on the rise of cultural assessment as an IAIA topic at the Perth meetings.

At the end of August, Will Knowland convened a planning committee session, attended by six Members. Rita Hamm was able to join the meeting. It proved to be a good review of the evolution of the WAB, and consideration of opportunities for increasing participation and activities in the future. There was consensus that the upcoming (2009) 40 year anniversary of the US National Environmental Policy Act should provide a leverage point for program and membership development.

At the September meeting, Stephen Lintner, gave a progress report on the application of Country Systems. Also, Gene Owens presented insights into the "Use of Beneficiary Assessment as a Tool for Project Adaptation in China."

Proposed action plan goals for the next six months.

The November meeting (November 18th) will combine with a reception at the Canadian Embassy. Norval Collins, a WAB Member resident in Halifax, has arranged to present on Applied Climate Change Tools and Technologies for environmental assessment.

The next meeting, to be held in January, has not yet been programmed.

For the April meeting, a major seminar is being planned. Stephen Lintner has kindly offered to provide access to World Bank meeting facilities for a Seminar that we are tentatively dubbing "The Next 40 Years for Environmental Impact Assessment." This event may coincide with the next meeting of the inter-IFI working group on harmonization of safeguards procedures.

Also planned for the next few months is the creation of a "WAB Home Page" within the IAIA website.

Respectfully submitted,

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